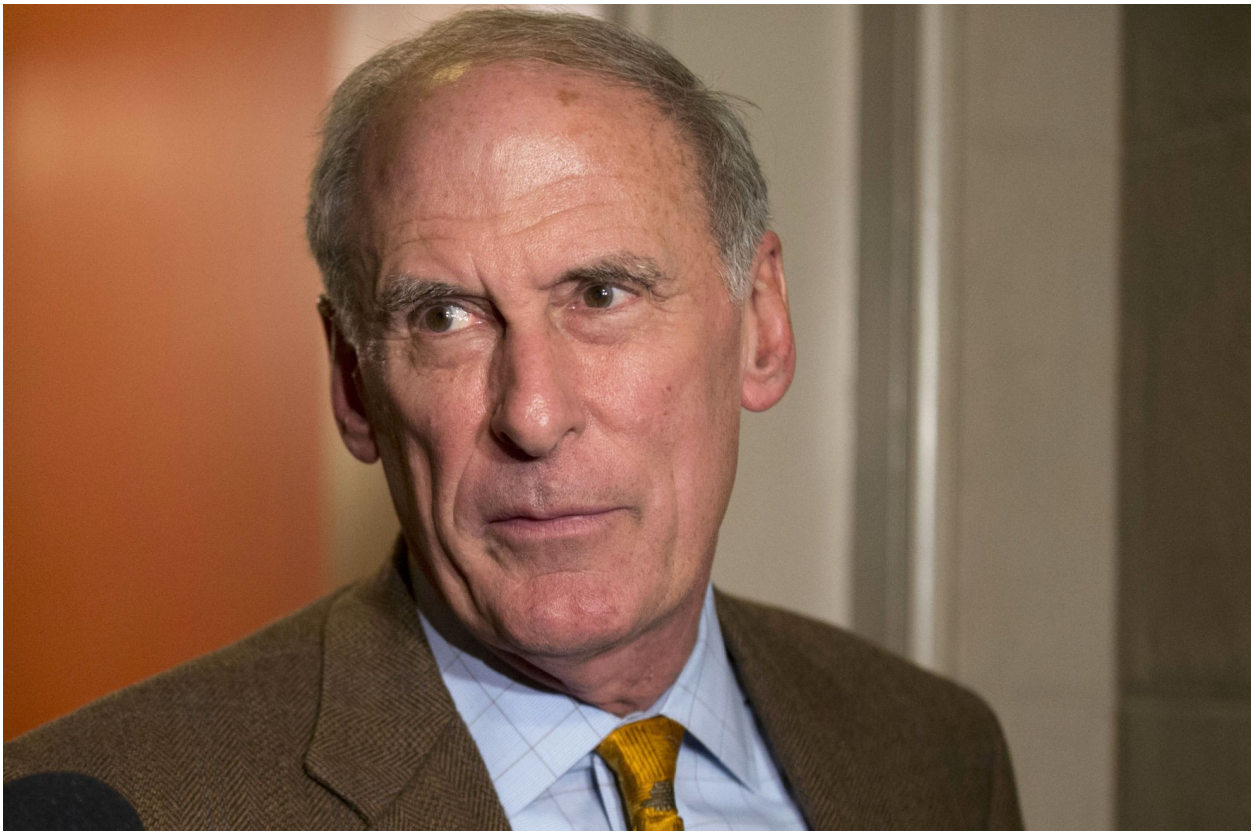
Published: Jan. 10, 2017, *Kokomo Tribune* [Page: A4]

http://www.kokomotribune.com/opinion/editorials/editorial-coats-good-fit-for-intelligence/article_46b9cfde-d69c-11e6-86e8-4366e9feb6c7.html



COATS: In this Dec. 31, 2012 file photo, Sen. Dan Coats, R-Ind. speaks on Capitol Hill in Washington. Coats, in line to be national intelligence director, has swung back and forth between government service and lobbying, the type of Washington career that President-elect Donald Trump has mocked. (AP Photo/Alex Brandon, File)

Editorial: Coats good fit for intelligence

President-elect Donald Trump Thursday selected former Indiana Sen. Dan Coats to lead the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, according to The Associated Press.

Along with Trump’s pick of Indiana Gov. Mike Pence as his running mate, and now vice president-elect, the Hoosier State looks to be well represented in the White House after Inauguration Day.

The director of national intelligence post itself was recommended by the 9/11 Commission Report, which was co-authored by former Indiana Democratic Rep. Lee Hamilton, in order to facilitate communication between the various intelligence agencies.

This position is now more important than ever given the swirling maelstrom both at home and abroad — not the least of which includes Russia’s meddling in the most recent presidential election, which the intelligence community now basically agrees on as settled fact. (Not that Trump is convinced, mind you.)

Coats is a strong, if interesting, pick for this most important job. While he has a less-than-stellar record on LGBT rights — a cause to which Trump has at least paid lip service — and his lucrative work as a lobbyist flies in the face of his new boss’ “drain the swamp” rhetoric, Coats’ long track record of government service and skepticism about Russian President Vladimir Putin is a welcome change from several of his new co-workers who possess neither.

“As a member of the Senate Intelligence Committee, Coats wrote President Obama after Russia annexed Crimea in 2013, urging Obama to impose

sanctions against a Russian weapons exporter," reported National Public Radio's Brian Naylor on Thursday. "Coats also sponsored an amendment to a Ukrainian aid bill in the Senate that would prohibit the U.S. government from doing any business with the exporter, a company called Rosoboronexport. … In 2014, Coats also called on organizers of soccer's World Cup to move the tournament, scheduled for Russia in 2018, somewhere else. All of which won Coats the honor of being banned from Russia, along with five other lawmakers, including Armed Services Chairman and 2008 Republican presidential nominee John McCain, and three Obama administration staff members."

A steady hand and incredulous eye toward authoritarian leaders is desperately needed in the coming Trump White House. Let's hope his voice on these matters is heard.